Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following amended paragraph:

[0021] In the elongated "U" of the preferred embodiment shown in Fig. 1, the bend **132** is a smooth radius that causes the tip **133** to be parallel to the needle shaft **131** and laterally offset from the shaft **131** a desired distance. However, in alternate embodiments the bend **132** may comprise more than one radius and/or one or more sharp angles, and the tip of **133** may angle toward, away from, or to either side of the shaft **131**, with the movable arm **140** shaped and oriented correspondingly to allow the tip protector **141** to mate smoothly with tip**133**. Both the needle shaft **131** and the tip protector **141** may also employ any angle, curve, or combination of angles and curves needed to allow the apparatus to reach any potential location for suture. In this embodiment the needle **130** and movable arm **140** have circular cross-sections, but any cross-sectional shape may be employed as desired. A hole **135** for suture material is bored radially through the needle a short distance below the base of the tip **133**. The needle preferably comprises a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of the needle attached to the body and having a first central axis portion located within the proximal end of the needle, the distal end of the needle having a needle tip capable of penetrating tissue and having at least one passage to hold suture material, the tapered portion of the needle tip having a center line comprising the centroids of adjacent selected planar cross-sections of the tapered portion, each selected planar cross-section selected for having a smaller area than each proximally located planar cross-section having the same centroid as the selected planar cross-section, the distal end of the needle formed so that at least a first line is tangent to the center line and the first central axis portion